

Case Study

Silentnight Gets Just-in-Time Automation with Automic® Workload Automation



Client Profile

Organization: Silentnight
Industry: Manufacturing



Business

Firmly established as the UK bed industry's largest manufacturer and brand leader, Silentnight is committed to offering consumer choice, quality, comfort and support, while constantly innovating with an aim to produce the ultimate bed selection.

Challenge

- Consolidate business operations to centralized ERP.
- Reduce batch window and response times.
- Automate JD Edwards EnterpriseOne background processes.

Solution

- Easy to use colorful process visualization.
- Validated JDE EnterpriseOne interfaces.
- Object oriented modular architecture.
- Output scanning.

Results

- Savings of 2½–3 hours processing time every night.
- Visibility into end-to-end business processes.
- Increased productivity for IT and administrative staff.
- Enhanced performance against business SLAs.

Business

The UK Bed Industry's Largest Manufacturer

Silentnight is synonymous with providing a relaxing and comfortable night's sleep to millions of consumers. Firmly established as the UK bed industry's largest manufacturer and brand leader, Silentnight is committed to offering consumer choice, quality, comfort and support, while constantly innovating. In addition to building and distributing a range of major brands including Pocketsprung, Layezee, and Rest Assured, Silentnight is the only manufacturer outside of the United States that is licensed to make Sealy beds.

Operating across three locations in Barnoldswick, Batley, and Espacia, Silentnight had relied upon a DEC Alpha based IT application, IMPCON, to support its manufacturing processes. When Silentnight became the last UK company still using the ERP, concerns about lack of integration were compounded by notice that the vendor's last support engineer was about to retire. Ticking all key boxes with manufacturing, distribution, and financials components Silentnight decided to implement JD Edwards EnterpriseOne as its corporate ERP standard.

While each plant had been dedicated to producing individual brands of bed, Silentnight wanted extra flexibility in terms of being able to route resources to match production demands. Consolidating business operations into a single JD Edwards instance would allow the bed maker to achieve this goal. Centralizing workload would also lead to Silentnight's JDE EnterpriseOne application needing to support a significant amount of transaction processing.

Challenges

Consolidate Business Operations to Centralized Enterprise Resource Planning

With a commitment to build and deliver beds within six days of ordering, Silentnight needed to optimize its IT processes to align with business demands. JDE generates massive quantities of transaction data, much of which requires batch processing. The internal JDE EnterpriseOne scheduler relies upon built-in time lags to prevent dependent jobs starting too soon, introducing avoidable latency into critical business operations. Failure to correctly estimate finish times could also result in jobs processing incorrect data.

"Going forward I knew JDE wouldn't cope. When you get to multiple sites you get issues. I knew the demands for processing would put so much pressure on the JDE platform. Jobs were taking much longer to run. Jobs that needed to run within a 24 hour cycle would take 29 hours," said Juilan Lempriere, JDE Project Manager at Silentnight. "We were having performance issues with balancing real time and batch processing demands. End users were feeling the impact with poor response times."

Solution

Silentnight selected Automic® Workload Automation because it offered unique rapid application automation of JDE EnterpriseOne batch processes through validation interfaces. Dynamic scheduling meant that the elapsed time for overnight high-volume workload could be compressed to fit into a shrinking batch window. It would also allow daytime background processing to be optimized, maximizing throughput at minimal impact.

"A scheduler was on my wish list. Previously experience of using in-house developers to write scripts and operating system tools combined with us not having a huge depth of technical knowledge told me I didn't want to develop our own scheduler at Silentnight," said Lempriere. "I knew what I wanted. I wanted end-to-end visibility into our business operations and I knew we would not get this from a homegrown tool. Automic talked the right language. I saw business value in rapid application automation of the JDE scheduler and our other key applications such as Cognos."

Selling the idea of acquiring additional tools to non-technical staff in the Silentnight steering group was not easy. Having invested in an expensive ERP they were surprised to learn that they needed to spend more to get a system that performs efficiently. The ROI tool provided by Automic helped improve Silentnight senior management's understanding of the benefits that a workload automation solution could bring to their JDE environment. Lempriere said, "The eight hour overnight batch window didn't give me enough time to run the jobs I needed to run. At the end of each day we needed to run MRP, sales updates, cost roll-ups, Cognos extracts, and integrity reports. Occasionally there would also be the need to apply system changes. Prior to implementing, we had incidents where the batch load would overrun. This would impact response times and end-user performance. This was an immediate win with Automic Workload Automation. This was nice because you could see benefit of the software from the first day."

Solution (cont.)

Business users rapidly identified Automic Workload Automation as a great tool for getting real time updates around the factory with no need for anyone to hit the Enter key. Automated alerts ensure that Help Desk staff no longer need to manually check reports. The object orientation allows Silentnight to manage and to monitor IT workload as logical groups that reflect its business process flows. With IT insight, business users can easily plan and make changes, while IT staff become more flexible in responding to business demands.

Automic Workload Automation is the automation layer in the IT architecture that Silentnight has established to support its business. “We’ve been making a cake,” said Lempriere. “We got underway with establishing a nice foundation. We’re now putting new controls in. This is aimed at two things, reducing TCO with tools that make our systems run smarter, and enabling greater flexibility in terms of making manufacturing and distribution processes match business demands. Automation is one of the ingredients that is helping make sure our cake is low fat.”

Right Information to the Right People at the Right Time

Prior to implementing the Automic solution, Silentnight integrity reporting jobs would run even though the primary sales update job had failed. With Automic, dependent jobs do not run if a primary job fails. This means time is not wasted and systems do not get clogged re-running jobs. Finance and admin users no longer need to manually check output files. Silentnight has automated integrity checks of reports, releasing staff from trawling through pages of figures.

In addition to JDE EnterpriseOne, Silentnight is also using Cognos for business intelligence management reporting and as its corporate data warehouse. Other critical applications include QAS (address management), Q Software (security), Formscape (electronic forms) and DSI (bar code scanning), and others that run on IBM, UNIX, Windows and Web-based platforms. Rapid application automation has allowed Silentnight to extend its use of automation to integrate with other systems that are crucial to its business operations.

“It’s funny, but we use old equipment when we are building beds but use modern IT tools to manage our business. We get status updates from real-time reporting that comes out of JDE. Cognos drives our production dashboard, giving us instant brand analysis dissected by models and ranges,” said Lempriere. “With Automic Workload Automation, we have automated emailing of reports to managers, senior management, and executives, ensuring they get detailed insight into individual brand performance.”

Results

Enhanced Performance Against Business SLAs

Silentnight is benefiting from Automic Workload Automation with a responsive JDE EnterpriseOne ERP system that ensures that staff do not spend time waiting on IT systems, so that beds are manufactured and dispatched in time to fulfill promises to customers. Automating the Cognos workload ensures that Silentnight senior management work with reports that contain the most accurate information that allows them to make smarter decisions on business operations.

“We couldn’t afford to continue running systems that had in-built slack times if we were going to support our business operations. Being able to eliminate the gaps from our JDE processing means Silentnight saves between two and a half and three hours on our overnight workload. We are also achieving efficiencies with staff spending less time doing tedious manual tasks such as checking reports. There’s also a closer alignment between business and IT users, which means that we have become more effective as a team supporting today’s and tomorrow’s business challenges. Automic Workload Automation is firmly established as the automation platform across the Silentnight IT landscape and will be an integral IT component in our future business growth,” said Lempriere.

For more information, please visit [ca.com/automation](https://www.broadcom.com/automation).